



Transit Means Getting People to Work

Jim Heck

Executive Director, WorkOne Southwest

WorkOne Southwest helps people find a new or better job, choose a career, find a good employee, access training, or get the information needed to succeed in today's ever-evolving workplace. Reliable public transportation service is key for WorkOne clients to find and maintain jobs. Currently, many individuals who require daily public transportation are not able to apply for higher paying jobs due to lack of routes to manufacturing employers outside of the city and limited hours of service.



Jim says, "Transportation is one of the biggest barriers our clients face, next to childcare. Solving transit problems has become one of our main concerns. Our current public transit service is not a workforce system, it's a convenience system."

WorkOne Southwest has been working with local employers, organizations and elected officials to find solutions. Jim continues, "WorkOne Southwest has convened a number of meetings and been involved with commissioned studies to show weakness and opportunity in Evansville's public transportation system. There is always a challenge of moving results from the studies to action. Funding is always a challenge."

With limited funding from the local level, WorkOne Southwest supports alternative service providers, including Bridge Builders, a local ministry providing nearly 400 trips daily getting people to and from work. In addition, WorkOne Southwest has met with larger employers, such as Toyota, to discuss ride share and other transportation solutions. Employers need their employees to have reliable service. Without it, jobs are left unfilled.

In Evansville, education depends on public transportation as well. Jim says, "At Ivy Tech, students rely on transportation. We need quality service for students to receive the education they need to enter the workforce."

WorkOne Southwest will continue its advocacy for increased public transportation funding. Jim continues, "Policy needs to change, and more public agencies need the authority to secure dedicated transit funding. Lack of transportation options limit the income clients can make. If we truly want to help employers get the employees they need during this tight time, we must invest in public transportation. This is where we can make the biggest difference."



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